

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted yesterday for legislation (H.R. 547), which was approved by the House, to make alternative fuels like cellulosic ethanol more affordable and accessible.

“Today we took a vital first step towards true energy independence,” said Arcuri, an original cosponsor of the measure. “H.R 547 provides for the needed research to make biofuels more compatible with current energy infrastructure. Biofuels are the way of the future. Continued domestic production and use of biofuels will reduce air emissions, diversify our energy supply and decrease our dependence on foreign oil.”

“Biofuels offer an amazing opportunity for economic development in New York. Last December, New York awarded \$14.8 million to build and operate a cellulosic biomass-to-ethanol demonstration plant in Rochester. A professor at Cornell University was recently awarded a \$10 million grant to upgrade Cornell's industrial biotechnology laboratories. The Biorefinery in New York project is about to embark on a \$20.6 million public-private partnership to demonstrate commercial scale cellulosic ethanol production,” Arcuri said.

Biofuels have different physical and chemical properties that make them incompatible with existing petroleum-based infrastructure. As a result, tank and pipeline corrosion, sediment buildup and/or clogged filters can arise.

H.R. 547 directs the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in consultation with the Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), to research and develop new technologies that would allow retailers to offer biofuels using existing infrastructure, rather than refurbishing or building new infrastructures. This will result in savings for both retailers and consumers in the transition to alternative fuels.

As a member of the House Rules Committee, Arcuri spoke on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in support of the Rule for Consideration of H.R. 547.

Attached are Arcuri's remarks as submitted for the record:

U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24)
U.S. House of Representatives

Remarks on the Rule for Consideration of the Advanced Fuels Infrastructure Research and Development Act (H.R. 547)

110th Congress, First Session
February 8, 2007

I thank my good friend and Rules Committee colleague from Vermont for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know the vote that occurred yesterday evening in the Rules Committee provides for an open rule on the Advanced Fuels Infrastructure Research and Development bill that we will consider this afternoon. And I was so pleased that my colleagues on the Rules Committee – including those on the other side of the aisle – voted unanimously to approve this rule. That level of support speaks volumes about the importance of bringing the Advanced Fuels Infrastructure bill to the floor of this chamber for consideration.

During Science Committee Chairman Gordon's remarks before the Rules Committee yesterday, he pointed out an issue that requires our utmost attention if we as a nation ever hope to truly address our nation's addiction to oil.

The issue is that cellulosic ethanol and other biofuels are highly corrosive and not compatible with the fuel distribution infrastructure currently in place to transport them.

Biofuels are the way of the future. Continued domestic production and use of biofuels will reduce air emissions, diversify our energy supply and decrease our dependence on foreign oil.

A classic “trifecta” if you will.

Unfortunately, this transportation barrier imposes increased cost burdens and could slow the transition we hope to make away from fossil fuels.

The Advanced Fuels Infrastructure bill takes a giant first step in the right direction to address the biofuel infrastructure problem by tasking the Environmental Protection Agency to develop additives, blendstocks, technologies, and other methods to make biofuels less corrosive.

Members of my staff joke that I am hooked on talking about “cellulosic ethanol.” I am more than hooked, I am addicted. No pun intended, but truth be known I would rather be addicted to something we produce domestically instead of foreign source oil. And so are many of my colleagues in this chamber. They, like me, understand the substantial benefits biofuels like cellulosic ethanol will provide for our nation’s growing energy demand.

We in Congress, and our counterparts at the state level, also realize the role which government has to play in developing cost-effective methods of producing these fuels.

Last December, my home state of New York awarded \$14.8 million to build and operate a cellulosic biomass-to-ethanol demonstration plant in Rochester, New York. A professor at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York was recently awarded a \$10 million grant to upgrade Cornell’s industrial biotechnology laboratories and improve researchers’ abilities to liberate sugars from woody biomass, and convert them into biofuels. In addition, the Biorefinery in New York project is about to embark on a \$20.6 million public-private partnership to demonstrate commercial scale cellulosic ethanol production in Lyonsdale, New York. Half of the \$20.6 million is private investment from a Texas-based energy company that will be pumped directly into the New York State economy. For too long New York State has been exporting money out of state to meet our energy needs – now we are importing those dollars back.

The President’s fiscal year 2008 budget request includes some misdirected funding cuts; however it does include \$292 million for research and development programs to promote biofuels, most notably the wide-scale production of cellulosic ethanol. This figure is more than double the fiscal year 2006 appropriation of \$119 million.

Cellulosic ethanol plants are starting to pop up all across Upstate New York and the rest of nation thanks to top-notch researchers at prestigious universities like Cornell and the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

Just yesterday one of my Upstate New York newspapers, the Syracuse Post Standard, ran a four page spread on the growth of alternative fuels and new energy technologies across the region. The article states, "Some local leaders say Central New York could become a hub for alternative energy." That type of economic boost would be welcomed nationally and locally.

There clearly is a need and a will to further develop and utilize biofuels. But if we cannot transport biofuels in an efficient, safe and effective way, all this research and development money from state and federal government, coupled with the creativity of our researchers, will be for naught.

I applaud Chairman Gordon for his vision and leadership on this issue. The members of the Science and Technology Committee consider themselves to be a committee of "good ideas." But also a committee of action and, by the action we are taking today, I would argue that label does not do the Science and Technology Committee justice – it is the committee of "great ideas."

Our constituents send us to Washington to represent their best interests. I am confident that the Advanced Fuels Infrastructure bill will go a long way toward making biofuels less corrosive and allow for increased use of cleaner and more efficient biofuels. That is something we can all agree is in everyone's best interest.

Thank you. I yield back the balance of my time.

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